

REMARKS

Applicants have reviewed, and carefully considered the non-final Office Action dated December 10, 2004. Claim 13 has been amended and claim 19 has been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10-13, 15-23, 25, 26, 28 and 30-32 are pending in the application.

In paragraph 3 on page two of the Office Action, claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Office Action stated that claim 15 depends from claim 14, which has been canceled. This claim should be amended to depend from claim 13.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection, but Applicant submits that the amendments to the claims overcome the rejection. Claim 15 has been canceled and claim 16 has been amended to depend from claim 13.

In paragraph 5 on page two of the Office Action, claims 13 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,774,146 (Mizutani) in view of either U.S. Patent 5,072,238 (Takamiya et al.) or U.S. Patent 6,606,945 (Shimatsu et al.).

In paragraph 6 on page three of the Office Action, claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizutani in view of either Takamiya et al. or Shimatsu et al., as applied to claim 13 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 4,876,606 (Banno et al.).

In paragraph 7 on page four of the Office Action, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10-12, 23, 25, 26, 28 and 30-32 were allowed. In paragraph 8 on page four of the Office Action, claims 17-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In paragraph 9 on page five of the Office Action, the Office Action indicated that claims 15 and

Application No.: 09/876,507,
Docket No. BLD920000065US1/(BMN.025 US01-0527)
Date of Office Action Response: December 13, 2005
Reply to Office Action Dated September 13, 2005

16 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, but in the interest of expediting prosecution have amended claim 13 to include the language formerly recited in objected to claim 15. Claim 15 has been canceled and claim 16 has been amended to depend from claim 13.

On the basis of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of this application and its allowance are requested.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Attorney for Applicant, David W. Lynch, at 423-757-0264.

Respectfully submitted,

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